

NEW JERSEY GAZETTE

Volume 2 • Issue 3

Spring 2004

The Newsletter of the New Jersey Historical Commission, the Historic Trust and the State Archives

WELCOME TO THE NEW JERSEY GAZETTE

The *New Jersey Gazette* is produced in partnership by the New Jersey State Archives, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the New Jersey Historic Trust. These three state agencies dedicated to the preservation and promotion of New Jersey's heritage have come together with the Public Policy Center of New Jersey, which publishes *New Jersey Heritage* magazine, to publish the *New Jersey Gazette*.

Veronica Calder serves as Editor of the *New Jersey Gazette*; she can be reached at the State Archives at njgazette@sos.state.nj.us.

REMINDER: NJHC GRANT AND PRIZE APPLICATION DATES

To apply to the New Jersey Historical Commission for a grant or prize, call Ms. Mary Murrin at (609) 984-0954 or check the NJHC Web site at www.newjerseyhistory.org. For helpful advice on applying for NJHC Project Grants in the upcoming September 15 round, see story on page 2 of this issue of the *Gazette*.

Projects Grants:

Deadline: September 15, 2004

Notification: November 2004

Minigrants:

No deadline: Reviewed bimonthly

Mildred Barry Garvin Prize for Teaching Black History:

Deadline: October 1, 2004

Notification: January 2005

Richard P. McCormick Prize for Scholarly Publication:

Deadline: January 2, 2005

Notification: September 2005.

General Operating Support Grants:

Letter of Intent: March 2005

Deadline: April 2005

Notification: July 2005

Alfred E. Driscoll Prize for Outstanding Dissertation:

Deadline: January 2, 2006

Caucus Archives Project Evaluation Service:

Deadline: None. Apply when convenient.

DONATION AND EASEMENT PRESERVE SALEM COUNTY'S NICHOLSON HOUSE

After years of anticipation, the Abel and Mary Nicholson House is now preserved in perpetuity, following the formal donation of the Salem County landmark house to the Salem Old House Foundation by the Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSEG). In addition, the New Jersey Historic Trust has received a protective



historic preservation easement on the property, ensuring that the unique 18th century patterned brick house will be saved for future generations to study and enjoy.

The easement, which was donated through the Trust's Historic Preservation Easement

Program, will ensure the preservation of the Nicholson's unique historic architecture. This house is a remarkably intact example of Delaware Valley patterned-end brick construction, an early Mid-Atlantic regional building tradition. The easement requires that the house's historic architecture be preserved and that the site remain undeveloped.

In 2000, the Nicholson House earned National Historic Landmark status, the highest level of designation by the federal government. With this designation, and because of its pristine condition and age, the house joins the company of such architectural and historical icons as Drayton Hall in South Carolina and Bacon's Castle in Virginia.

(Continued on Page 4)



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PRESERVED: The Abel and Mary Nicholson House was donated to the Salem Old House Foundation by PSEG, and the Historic Trust has received a protective historic preservation easement on the property.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION PROJECT GRANTS:

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

September 15, 2004 is the deadline for applying to the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) for a Project grant. Below are some frequently asked questions and answers about these grants. For complete information see our FY2005 Project Grant booklet, which is available by calling Ms. Diane Dillon at (609) 984-3458. You can also download a copy at the following Web site www.newjerseyhistory.org.

Q. Who can apply?

A. Both individuals and organizations can apply for project grants, although the eligibility requirements vary for different types of projects. For example, fellowships are designed for individual applicants, while only organizations can apply for funding for exhibitions, conferences, conservation of historical materials, or digital media.

Q. Does an organization have to be exclusively devoted to history, like a museum or historical society, to apply?

A. No. Libraries, schools, churches, municipal and

county agencies, and other organizations are eligible for grants, as long as the projects concern the history of New Jersey.

Q. How much can I request?

A. From \$3,000 to \$20,000.

Q. Do I have to match a grant with my organization's own money?

A. Organizations with a budget less than \$500,000 do not have to provide a match. Organizations with budgets of \$500,000 and above have to provide a match equal to 50 percent of the grant request. The match need not be in cash – it can include donated services such as the value of volunteer time, donated equipment or supplies, and donated space for exhibits, storage, or office space. Individuals do not have to show a match.

Q. What kinds of projects are eligible for funding?

A. Applicants can seek funding for the following kinds of projects: exhibitions; public programs;

conservation of historical materials; educational initiatives; research (including oral history and archaeology); publications; media projects (film, videotape, radio, and digital), and fellowships. All projects must focus on some aspect of the history of New Jersey.

Q. Who makes the decision on project grant applications?

A. All project grant applications are reviewed by impartial, outside panels of experts who use uniform criteria to evaluate the proposals. The panels' recommendations are considered by the Grants & Prizes Committee of the NJHC, and the final decision is made by the full NJHC board.

Q. Can I get advice about applying for a project grant?

A. Absolutely. The staff of the Historical Commission will be glad to give guidance to anyone interested in applying. Call the grants director, Ms. Mary Murrin, at (609) 984-0954 or contact her by email at mary.murrin@sos.state.nj.us.



Encyclopedia of New Jersey Is Published

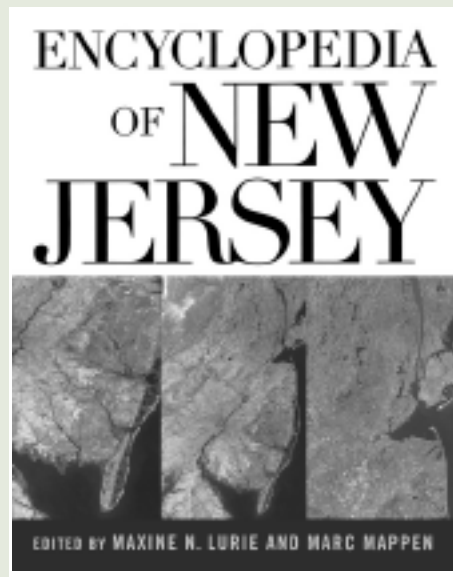
The *Encyclopedia of New Jersey*, the most comprehensive reference work ever written on the Garden State, has been published by the Rutgers University Press. This one-volume, 968-page reference book contains nearly 3,000 entries, 585 illustrations, and 130 maps. The New Jersey Historical Commission is one of the sponsors of this project. The co-editors in chief are NJHC board member Maxine Lurie and executive director Marc Mappen.

The topics covered include architecture, arts and entertainment, biographies of famous New Jerseyans, business and industry, ethnic groups, geography, history, legal decisions, native plants and animals, municipalities and counties, science and technology, sports and recreation, and much more.

This reference guide includes facts on every New Jersey county and municipality. Native Americans and ethnic groups are explored, as are religious, political, historical, and cultural organizations. Comprehensive lists range from historic sites to hospitals, from nature centers to missile sites. Readers can find profiles of poets and painters, athletes and astronauts, governors and generals. Historic triumphs like the Revolutionary War's Battle of Trenton and tragedies like the Hindenberg explosion are also chronicled.

The *Encyclopedia* took nine years to complete. It was overseen by an editorial board composed of experts in a variety of fields. Approximately 800 authors submitted entries.

The *Encyclopedia of New Jersey* (\$49.95) is now available at bookstores.



Annual Historical Commission Conference to Focus on Slavery and Emancipation

The theme of the 19th Annual Conference of the New Jersey Historical Commission will be "Slavery and Emancipation." The conference will be held at the War Memorial in Trenton on Saturday, November 20.

The main speakers will be two renowned historians: Professor Ira Berlin of the University of Maryland and Professor Clement Price of Rutgers University. Berlin is the author of *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in Mainland North America*. Price is the editor of *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey*.



In addition to the two speakers, the conference will feature exhibits, an awards lunch, and a panel discussion.

For further information, check the New Jersey Historical Commission's Web site at www.newjerseyhistory.org or call Ms. Diane Dillon at the Commission at (609) 984-3458.

(Note: This conference was originally scheduled for last fall, but was cancelled due to a severe snowstorm. In response to popular demand, it has been rescheduled as the theme for this year's conference.)

DARM Joins Statewide Digitization Initiatives

The Division of Archives & Records Management has partnered with several other New Jersey repositories in two ambitious, statewide digitization projects. The first is *Electronic New Jersey: A Digital Archives of New Jersey History* at www.scc.rutgers.edu/njh/. Sponsored by the Rutgers University's Scholarly Communications Center, the ENJ Web site was established in 1997 to provide in-depth Internet resources for teachers and researchers of New Jersey history. Hunterdon Central Regional High School, Spotswood School District and Rutgers University Libraries were the original partners in the project. Initial teaching modules included Homesteads, Social Protest, the Civil War, the Revolutionary War and World War II in a New Jersey context.

In November 2002, ENJ received a \$20,000 special grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission to add teaching modules and expand its resources to include documents from the New Jersey State Archives and New Jersey Historical Society, in addition to the core material from Rutgers' Special Collections & University Archives. Last



spring, project consultant Dorothy Hartman selected documents from the three archives on several subjects, including Women's Suffrage, the Cold War and Academic Freedom, and New Jersey Industry. In July, the project held its teacher

institute, where these materials were reviewed by educators and new teaching modules were developed. State Archives Chief Joseph Klett gave a short presentation at the institute relative to DARM's collections and how they will be used. ENJ completed scanning of the documents in early 2004; field testing and mounting of the new Web site modules are scheduled for the spring and summer.

In summer of 2002, DARM also joined the newly formed Statewide Digitization Task Force (SDTF) sponsored by the New Jersey State Library. This body met to discuss how to best identify, digitize, and deliver New Jersey cultural heritage resources to educators and researchers via the Worldwide Web. Concurrently, the task force identified potential funding sources and developed metadata and infrastructure requirements for a digital repository. The work of the SDTF resulted in the creation of the *New Jersey Digital Highway: Where History, Culture, and Learning Merge* (NJDH) at www.njdigitalhighway.org and the production of a National Leadership Grant proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Studies (IMLS) for development of the digital repository and Web site. The NJDH Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from the State Library, Rutgers University Libraries, DARM, the New Jersey Historical Society, public libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions from around the state. Supervisor of Electronic Records Management Daniel W. Noonan is DARM's primary representative in the NJDH effort, and was a co-writer of the grant proposal.

New Jersey historians, archivists and librarians were elated when IMLS



RED SCARE: This comic-book-style pamphlet from the records of New Jersey's "Commission to Investigate Communistic and Un-American Teachings and Activities in Public Schools" is among the scanned documents contributed to the *Electronic New Jersey* Web site by the New Jersey State Archives.

announced in September 2003 its \$463,000 award to NJDH. This initial funding will create statewide digital and metadata infrastructure standards for cultural history collections. The theme will be New Jersey's immigration history and ethnic heritage. The State Archives will contribute digital images from its *Petitions for Naturalization, 1749-1810* and *Work Projects Administration (WPA) / New Jersey Writers' Project / New Jersey Ethnological Survey Records, 1935-1939*.

DARM's participation in these digitization efforts relates to its mission to promote the use of New Jersey's rich documentary heritage as an educational resource for adults and children. Both projects—*Electronic New Jersey* and *New Jersey Digital Highway*—will promote study of and appreciation for the history of our state, and encourage broader participation and leadership in civic affairs.

Historical Records Advisory Board Appointments Announced, Federal Grant Received

On April 30, 2004, Governor James E. McGreevey announced new appointments to the New Jersey State Historical Records Advisory Board (NJSHRAB): Nelson Chou, Lois R. Densky-Wolff, Lisa C. Mangiafico, and Ethel M. Washington. The Governor also reappointed board members Ronald L. Becker, Maxine N. Lurie, Ph.D., Marc Mappen, Ph.D., Ben Primer, Ph.D., James F. Turk, Ph.D.; and Karl J. Niederer as State Historical Records Coordinator.

In other news, a generous two-year federal grant will support the revision of NJSHRAB's 2001 strategic plan for historical records, and promote several statewide activities and programs to enhance public awareness of the importance of historical records preservation and access for research. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) awarded \$20,000 to

support the board's work during 2004 and 2005.

In March 2004, NJSHRAB welcomed Barbara Pepe as part-time administrative assistant to board coordinator Karl J. Niederer. Funded by the NHPRC grant, Ms. Pepe will provide planning and support services to the board as it undertakes revision of the strategic plan revision and statewide archives programming development.

NJSHRAB was established in 1975 to serve as the central advisory body for historical records planning in the state, and as a conduit and review body for grant projects funded by the NHPRC in support of archival and records management programs. For more information, visit the board's Web site: www.njarchives.org/links/sbrab.html.

Abel Nicholson House Is Saved in Salem

(Continued from Page 1)

"I hope today is the beginning of a new understanding of what this building is," said Ron Magill, Salem Old House Foundation President at last October's dedication. "When thinking of nationally important buildings, we visit Mount Vernon; we stare up in amazement at the Statue of Liberty," he continued. "However, we need to look no further than here in our own backyard for a nationally important building."

What makes the brick farmhouse so unique? Built in 1722, the Abel and Mary Nicholson House stands alone as the only known, intact survivor of an Anglo-American building tradition that existed for three quarters of a century, from approximately 1700 to 1775. When constructed, it was at a scale and with a level of detail that made it a mansion in relation to other dwellings of the period in the area. The crowning decorative feature was the diamond pattern on the east end, culminating in the construction date.

The 1722 block of the structure has existed for more than 280 years in an unaltered state, enhanced by a patina of age, with only routine maintenance, no major remodeling or restoration, and without the intrusion of electricity or a central heating system. The 1859 addition, with a comparable level of architectural integrity enhances the significance of the property. The house represents a building style that reached its peak in the mid-



DISTINCTIVE BRICKWORK: The East facade of the Abel Nicholson House features an attractive checkered pattern.

eighteenth century in rural southern New Jersey.

The Nicholson House is the second-oldest known house of this type in Salem County and contains the best-preserved interior of any known to survive in New Jersey and probably the nation. While many patterned brick structures support decoration on only one wall, this structure is decorated on all elevations,

including an elaborate diamond decorated east gable wall with the date of construction, "1722." The other three walls are less elaborately decorated with checkered patterns, also using glazed brick headers.

Recent interpretations of the spaces in the Nicholson House have proved invaluable in re-examining and interpreting regional architecture and the use of domestic space. One unusual feature is a writing closet – a small "room" to the side of a fireplace mantel that contains a desk surface, bookshelves, a window, and ventilation grill. Such physical evidence for a writing closet is rare, and has been found in only two other examples in the Delaware Valley.

In addition to its extraordinary architectural integrity, the house has well documented associations with the earliest Quaker settlement and the first permanent English settlement in the State of New Jersey. The builder, Abel Nicholson, arrived in West Jersey in 1675 with his father, Samuel Nicholson and John Fenwick, the colony founder. Samuel purchased 2,000 acres in Elsinboro Township and a 16-acre lot in the City of Salem, where he constructed his house and where the first Salem Meeting of the Society of Friends organized in 1676. Samuel Nicholson sold his house to the Salem Meeting in 1680 and relocated to his Elsinboro property. Upon Samuel's death in 1693, his estate was divided between his two sons with Abel inheriting his father's homestead farm. Also in 1693, Abel married Mary Tyler, and in 1722, at the age of 50, he built his new, brick house.

Salem County Has First National Historic Landmark:

Ronald E. Magill, president of the Salem Old House Foundation, made these remarks last October at the Abel & Mary Nicholson House National Historic Landmark Dedication:

As we think back several generations, we realize that relatively few people are individually remembered. Others are remembered at arm's length by what they left behind. Whether obscure or famous, practically all people are revealed in the places in which they lived. Houses record time in a unique way; they can reveal much about the people who lived in them and the period in which they were built. Houses also document changing customs and economic conditions in later alterations and additions.

Today we stand before the house that Abel and Mary Nicholson had built in 1722. A

building that has witnessed many changes. It emerged from its excavated cellar pit the same as any tract house in the twenty-first century. The family watched its construction with the same anticipation and longing that any contemporary family experiences. But this house arose in a wilderness, with only the Alloways Creek as its initial highway. The front of the house faces south towards that creek. Today we approached from the back of the house on a lane that probably did not exist when the house was built.

Our purpose here today is to pay homage to this house that carries the Nicholson name. But why? What makes it stand out—not just an old house down a farm lane but a building of national significance?



Was it what Abel and Mary had planned when they reviewed with the bricklayer, John Mason, the drawings for its patterned end?

Was it what the Nelson family foresaw in 1859 when they removed the old, original kitchen and built their fine new addition?

Was it that Thomas Yorke, Jr., photographed it 120 years ago? Or Joseph Sickler or Lars de Laugerburg published its image in the mid-twentieth century?

Perhaps the last private owners, Gil and Sally Harbeson did begin to see and understand just how special the house is. In their 50 years of ownership from the mid-1940s until Sally's death in 1995, they consciously shielded it from outsiders and tended it to the best of their means.

I hope today is the beginning of a new understanding of what this building is. When thinking of nationally important buildings, we

Salem County

The house remained in private hands until PSEG purchased the house and farm in 1995. The utility later sold the entire parcel, except for the house and five acres, to the State of New Jersey as permanent open space. To care for the house until a suitable new owner could be identified, PSEG hired an architectural preservation firm to create a preservation plan for the structure and began implementing some of those recommendations for stabilization and preservation by securing and ventilating the historic structure.

The property's new owner, the non-profit Salem Old House Foundation, was founded in 2000 to preserve and rehabilitate historic properties in the county and initially completed a rehabilitation of a 1726-era house in Salem. The group plans to raise funds to implement other recommendations from the preservation plan, and to do further study of the building and the potential archaeological resources on the property. This year, the Foundation applied to the Capital Preservation Grants Program funded by the New Jersey Cultural Trust to stabilize the brick gable end and decorative corbelled chimneys, which are in need of repair.

In addition to the physical investigation and preservation of the historic house, the site itself presents other challenges for future use of the property and interpretation of the house to the public. Isolated by its rural location on a roadway that has a tendency to flood with the tides, the Nicholson House may never become a popular tourist attraction, but this landmark will receive the study and attention it deserves.



Governor Visits State Archives

On January 27, 2004, Gov. James E. McGreevey met with staff of the Division of Archives and Records Management at the State Archives' public research center in Trenton. During his visit, the Governor enjoyed viewing an exhibit of original manuscripts, maps and photographs presented by Division Director Karl J. Niederer (left) and Chief of Archives Joseph Klett (right). Governor McGreevey selected one item in the display, a 1979 photograph of Gov. Brendan T. Byrne boxing with Muhammad Ali, for presentation to the former governor on his eightieth birthday in April 2004.

Photo courtesy of the Office of the Governor

‘No Further Than Our Own Back Yard’

visit Mount Vernon; we stare up in amazement at the Statue of Liberty; we tour Drayton Hall outside Charleston, South Carolina. However, we need to look no further than here in our own backyard for a nationally important building.

The Nicholson House is believed to be the most pristine survivor of an architectural style that existed in the United States for little more than one generation nearly 300 years ago. Now it is up to a new generation to ensure its survival. To make sure people listen to the lessons it can teach us.

Clearly PSEG is to be commended for caring for the house for the last eight years. Brian Duffy, then President of the Salem County Historical Society, rallied initial support. Janet Wolf and Phil Correll of the Park Service's New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route have been untiring in acknowledging the house's national

significance. Congressman Frank LoBiondo and his staff have been openly supportive in publicly acknowledging the property's importance and in seeking ways to assist with its preservation. Even more recently, a core group of local, state and national organizations have come together to brainstorm and move forward with planning for the property and its potential.

Today, however, is *not* the culmination of the effort to recognize the significance of this house to Salem County, to Southern New Jersey, and to the United States.

Today is a beginning.

Today we begin the trek forward. Much needs to be done: planning, strategizing, stabilizing, preserving, documenting.

This house is a document—a treasure trove of information waiting to be understood and interpreted. It tells part of the story of who we

are as an American people. It records the impact of Quaker settlers on this region and the artistic talent of the 18th century brick masons. The cut out hearts above the door reflect the love within a family. The 1859 wing documents the economic well-being of another time, and today's dedication reflects the nation's understanding that all these things contribute to our culture and our history.

Generation after generation of people have respected and protected this house for over 280 years—nearly three centuries. I hope that you will join us on this journey to spread the word about this house and to plan its future.

Let's work together to ensure that future generations will have the same opportunity to visit, understand, and appreciate this new National Historic Landmark—the first such landmark in either Salem or Cumberland County.

New Jersey Cultural Trust Announces First Financial Stabilization Grants

At its April board meeting, the New Jersey Cultural Trust approved and awarded its first financial stabilization grants to 15 historical organizations. These recipients were recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey Historical Commission. The financial stabilization grant program authorized by the Cultural Trust Act of 2000, is funded by the grants from interest earnings of the Historic Trust Fund.

Under the terms of the Cultural Trust Act, history and humanities organizations submitted applications to the New Jersey Historical Commission, which brought together independent panel of experts to review the applications.

Based on the findings of the review panel, the NJHC decided which applications to recommend for funding to the Cultural Trust, which made the final decision. The grants will make it possible for organizations to develop and implement strategic, marketing, and communication plans; improve fundraising operations; expand membership programs; undertake staff training; and carry out other activities designed to improve institutional effectiveness.

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts conducted a similar process to make recommendations to the Cultural Trust for financial stabilization grants for arts organizations. The New Jersey Historic Trust did the same for capital project grants for history and humanities organizations.

The following are the history organizations that received financial stabilization funding:

Inlet Public/Private Association (Absecon Lighthouse), Atlantic County

Alice Paul Institute (formerly the Alice Paul Centennial Institute), Burlington County

Burlington County Historical Society, Burlington County

Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum, Cape May County

Bayshore Discovery Project, Cumberland County

The New Jersey Historical Society, Essex County

Lambertville Historical Society, Inc., Hunterdon County

Historical Society of Princeton, Mercer County

Preservation New Jersey, Inc., Mercer County

Monmouth County Historical Association, Monmouth County

Canal Society of New Jersey, Morris County

Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Morris County

Ocean County Historical Society, Ocean County

Salem County Historical Society, Salem County

New Jersey History Series Now Available on Video, DVD

Forget the Sopranos. Now you can enjoy the vivid history of New Jersey at home or in your classroom.

New Jersey Legacy is a comprehensive series of ten half-hour programs on video and DVD co-produced by the New Jersey Historical Commission and NJN Public Television.

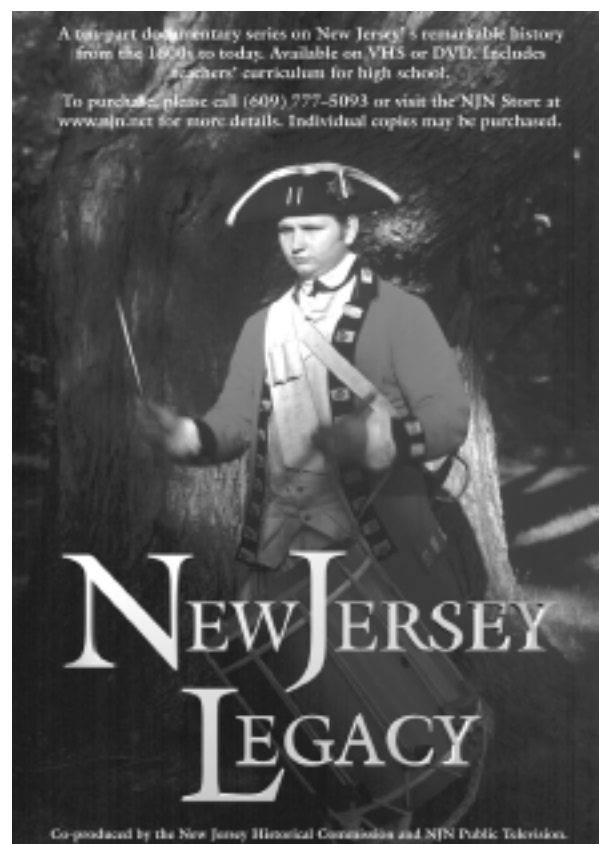
The program is of interest to adults and can be used as teaching aids in the classroom for seventh grade through high school. A teachers' curriculum accompanies the set. The programs, narrated by screen star Celeste Holm and renowned New Jersey author and historian John T. Cunningham, portray the many layers of New Jersey history with engaging stories, archival footage and dramatic reenactments.

The series opens with the initial contact between the Lenape—New Jersey's first inhabitants—and the Dutch colonists in the early seventeenth century and continues through the period of British rule, the American Revolution, the gradual abolition of slavery, the market revolution, urbanization, the women's movement, immigration trends, technological change and Progressive reform.

It culminates with a look at the shift of political power and population from the cities to the suburbs in the second half of the twentieth century.

The series, which originally aired on NJN television, is co-produced by David S. Cohen, New Jersey Historical Commission, and Lou Presti, NJN. Funding for the series is provided by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Office of the Governor, the New Jersey State Legislature, the E. J. Grassmann Trust, the Union Foundation and the New Jersey Historical Commission in the New Jersey Department of State. Additional funding is from the Bunbury Company and the Society of Colonial Wars in New Jersey. Funding for the production of the VHS and DVD versions is provided by the Charles Edison Fund and the Beneficial Management Corporation.

The New Jersey Legacy series price is \$75 for VHS tape and \$85 for DVD. The cost includes a teacher's curriculum for high school classes. Individual copies of the curriculum may also be purchased. The set is available for purchase at the NJN Video Store by phone at (609) 777-5093 or online at www.njn.net.



METLAR-BODINE HOUSE TO REBUILD AFTER DEVASTATING FIRE

Fire damaged the Metlar-Bodine House Museum in Piscataway last July, shortly after the organization learned it received two matching grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust. While the grants provided an exciting affirmation for the future, the fire taught a lesson in survival for the township and dedicated museum staff and volunteers as they sifted through debris to identify historic building materials and objects in the collection that withstood the blaze.

Since that time, the township — which leases the property from the state — expressed dedication to rebuilding the museum, an estimated three-year project. Insurance funds are expected to pay for rebuilding sections of the fire-damaged structure and repairing or conserving damaged artifacts. Donors are helping replace items that were lost in the fire. The museum also launched a “Rebuilding Our Past” campaign to raise additional funds, established an off-site office location and found storage for its archives.



As the museum seeks to reestablish its collection, Executive Director June Sadlowski is grateful for the public's generosity. “The most wonderful things that's happened is that we've received a wonderful outpouring from the community, and from the history community as well,” she explained.

Restoration of the fire-damaged wood shingle roof and structure is the current priority. The work will commence as soon as permits are approved. Specifications are based on extensive drawings by the late preservation architect Herbert J. Githens, who guided a 1995 roof restoration, which was partly funded by a grant from the Historic Trust.

The Metlar-Bodine House includes one of the last extant houses of the Raritan Landing



RAVAGED BY FIRE: Flames shoot out of the roof of the historic Metlar-Bodine House Museum in Piscataway during a fire last July. Township officials have made a commitment to rebuild the museum, which had received a pair of Historic Trust grants just weeks before the blaze occurred.

Photo by Arnold Henderson.

settlement, the first settlement that flourished along the Raritan River in the 18th century. The house's subsequent architectural additions are vernacular reflections of design trends and style. It is those later additions, the 1780s and 1840s sections of the house that sustained the most damage after the fire. The earliest section, the 1728 section, is stable.

The township received two separate awards from the 2002 grant round from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund. A \$39,641 grant will help fund a preservation plan for the oldest section of the house and a salvaged interior wall from a Georgian mansion, Ross Hall, where General George Washington

celebrated the first anniversary of the birth of our country. Also included are design services for reconstruction of a 1950s breezeway for use as a museum/visitor orientation/exhibit hall space and accessible restrooms. Work on these reports will begin soon.

A \$157,383 matching grant for capital preservation will help fund the rehabilitation of remaining historic features that may not be covered by reconstruction. Years from now when the museum is restored, the fire damage and recovery will simply be another chapter in the three century long history of this unique landmark.

Teachers Share Historical Commission's Mildred Barry Garvin Prize

The Mildred Barry Garvin Prize of \$1000 is awarded each year by the New Jersey Historical Commission in recognition of outstanding efforts by a New Jersey K-12 teacher, counselor, or school librarian in increasing student awareness of and interest in African American history. The award is named in honor of the late Assemblywoman Mildred Barry Garvin, who was a member of the Historical Commission from 1980 to 1987 and whose legislation in 1984 established the commission's Afro-American history program. This year two teachers shared the Garvin prize: Muneerah Higgs, a 7th and 8th grade Social Studies teacher at Lawnside Public School and Richard D. Schwartz, Coordinator of Social Studies at Whippany Park High School.

Ms. Higgs was awarded the 2004 Garvin Prize for her work in preparing curriculum resources—teaching tools—in the form of two videos that deal with the past of the historic all-black community of Lawnside, the only such community in New Jersey to be incorporated as a municipality. Ms. Higgs makes effective use of these videos in presenting

African-American history to her Lawnside Public School students.

Mr. Schwartz received the 2004 Garvin Prize because of the wide scope of his presentation of African-American history and his effective use of primary historical documents as part of his presentation. For example, over the past five years he has written and directed five multimedia productions that focus on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. These productions have involved several of his high school's departments, among them the choral department, which performed appropriate spirituals, and the theater and arts departments, which produced a theater-quality film on the modern civil rights movement. Among the primary source documents he has used in narrating the story of black Americans are letters written to Jackie Robinson regarding his breaking the color bar in major league baseball and the 1919 letter of James Dickson Carr, the first black graduate of Rutgers University, that protested his alma mater's decision to honor a request by Washington and Lee University that Paul Robeson, because of his color, not be allowed to play against the Washington and Lee football team.



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The Division of Archives and Records Management has overall responsibility for the efficient management and preservation of all records produced by New Jersey state, county, and local government agencies.



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The mission of the New Jersey Historical Commission is to advance public knowledge of the history of New Jersey through grants, conferences, research, publications, and media projects.



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The mission of the New Jersey Historic Trust is to advance the preservation of the state's historic properties through financial, educational, and stewardship programs.



*The Newsletter of the New Jersey Historical Commission,
the Historic Trust and the State Archives*

The Newsletter of the New Jersey
Historical Commission, the Historic Trust
and the State Archives

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